

*WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Monday, June 12, 2017, on Affordable Housing.*

*Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 8:06 p.m. The meeting was held in the Council Room of the Municipal Building.*

*PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Judith F. Davis, Konrad E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Silke I. Pope, Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan.*

*STAFF PRESENT WERE: Nicole Ard, City Manager; Jessica Bellah, Community Planner; and David Moran, Assistant City Manager.*

*ALSO PRESENT WERE: Hillary Chapman, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG); Jesse Buggs, City of Bowie; Stephanie Proestel, Housing Initiative Partnership (HIP); Bill Duncan (formerly with Enterprise Community Partners); Nicole Williams, Advisory Planning Board; Maya Patterson, City of Bowie MML Intern; and Jim Giese, News Review.*

*Mayor Jordan welcomed everyone and there were introductions.*

*Ms. Chapman cited a projected 10% population growth rate and 18% employment growth rate in the County between now and 2045. She stated there were more people coming to the County than available housing units. Ms. Chapman stated that COG regularly studied housing issues and there was a need for affordable housing.*

*Ms. Chapman asked what recommendations were implemented by the intern and/or what had changed since the intern's report. Mayor Jordan responded that undeveloped land was not available in the City and Greenbelt's challenges were maintaining affordability, especially on the apartment side, citing Franklin Park as an example. Mayor Jordan stated the recommendation that stood out was rent stabilization. Ms. Mach favored establishing limited equity cooperative housing. Mr. Herling stated that the Greenbelt Homes Incorporated (GHI) owned apartments were the most reasonably priced. Ms. Davis stated that folks desire affordable housing near Metro stations. Ms. Pope stated that the new Verde apartments were more focused on young working couples. Mayor Jordan indicated there was a nice variety of housing stock in the City.*

*Ms. Proestel summarized HIP's efforts including creating multi-family housing. She noted they provide housing counseling as well.*

*Mr. Roberts stated that Franklin Park provided a huge opportunity to convert some of the apartments into for sale units. Mr. Herling stated that Montgomery County's Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDU) approach was a good model. Mr. Putens stated that the City has a Section 8 apartment building for low income senior and disabled residents (Green Ridge House).*

*Ms. Proestel commented on the right of first refusal law granting the County an opportunity to purchase properties. She suggested communication with the County Housing Department. Mayor Jordan stated that some of Greenbelt's goals don't necessarily align with the County's. Ms. Proestel suggested partnering with non-profit organizations. Ms. Proestel referenced the County's strategic planning process. Mr. Putens asked about the vacant nursing home site and*

*how to stimulate development there. Ms. Proestel responded that non-profit developers were a good partner.*

*Ms. Davis summarized the County's history of pursuing higher end development to balance the types of housing in the County. She expressed concern about older neighborhoods becoming gentrified. Ms. Davis also suggested considering a rent stabilization similar to Takoma Park's program.*

*Mayor Jordan asked about Bowie's affordable housing program. Mr. Buggs stated that some of the non-profit entities can bring in financing. Mr. Buggs discussed a meeting in Bowie three years ago where senior citizens showed up and asked for three items: rent stabilization for senior housing facilities, rent control and rental assistance. He stated that Bowie is currently accommodating three new developments: Melford, Karrington (South Lake) and Amber Ridge. He noted 5% of the Melford units would be affordable. Mr. Buggs stated that affordable senior housing was a serious problem in the region. Mayor Jordan asked about the mood at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Mr. Buggs responded that potential pain from proposed HUD cuts would be devastating. He suggested combining programs to leverage funds.*

*Ms. Chapman stated that the affordable housing challenges are region-wide. She indicated that the way jurisdictions address these challenges differs, but many of the tools used are the same. Ms. Chapman noted that the City of Rockville had completed a housing needs assessment. She mentioned using a database to track available properties and/or GIS to track where seniors are living.*

*Mr. Buggs suggested the City review and obtain a State study resulting from House Bill 991. Mayor Jordan asked about the right of first refusal and believed municipalities should also have this right. Mr. Buggs cited efforts in Bowie to obtain more planning authority.*

*Ms. Proestel noted that the County had not yet exercised its right of first refusal. She stated that the County was willing to partner with jurisdictions that had resources.*

*Mr. Roberts stated one of the benefits of Greenbelt was that a young person could start out in an apartment, then move to GHI and finally a single-family home. Mr. Herling suggested providing an environment that was more conducive to cooperatives. He cited transportation costs to drive to jobs outside the County. Mr. Herling reiterated using a MPDU program and suggested mixed use zoning with incentives.*

*Mr. Duncan stated that the GHI Cooperative was one of the best sources of affordability in the area. He suggested that the City consider a study similar to the one done in Rockville.*

*Ms. Davis stated that the City and County don't have money and that non-profits were liable to be hurt by Federal budget cuts. She cited investor purchases of condo units at Greenbriar as a challenge. Mr. Buggs noted that cash purchases were becoming more common.*

*Mr. Herling asked if the City could implement rent control. Mr. Buggs referenced an opinion from Bowie's City Attorney stating that the City could implement rent control. Ms. Davis suggested contacting Takoma Park to gauge their experience with rent control.*

*Mr. Orleans asked if the right of refusal legislation applied to municipalities. He also asked what kinds of people the City wanted to help with affordable housing.*

*There was discussion regarding “Source of Income” discrimination. Ms. Davis and Mr. Putens asked if the City can implement this on their own.*

*Mr. Herling asked about rent-to-own programs. Ms. Proestel indicated there was limited success with these programs and that often people keep renting.*

*Ms. Chapman stated that there is an opportunity to continue the conversation. She shared some tools and resources. She announced the release of a guidebook for increasing housing affordability in the Washington region. She suggested inviting Sara Daines from Takoma Park to discuss their rent stabilization program.*

*Ms. Proestel stressed partnerships on a variety of different levels. She suggested a careful inventory of land and commercial buildings. Ms. Proestel highlighted resources to help homeowners remain in their homes.*

#### *Informational Items*

*Mr. Moran briefed Council on an opportunity to extend the City’s electricity supply contracts for three years at a rate 42% lower which would save approximately \$96,000 annually.*

*Mayor Jordan suggested the City announce that City facilities are available if residents need a cool space.*

*Ms. Davis asked to have the Recreation Department at the July City Council meeting for a presentation.*

*The meeting ended at 10:03 p.m.*

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*David E. Moran  
Assistant City Manager*